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ABSTRACT

This manual describes a parent involvement program on the elementary level. Although the primary aim of such a program is to broaden the learning opportunities of each child through increased personal attention and support, there are also many advantages for the teacher, the school, and the parents. The teacher has more time to devote to the professional aspects of teaching and is able to learn more about the individual child; the school is able to obtain skills and services from parents which might not otherwise be available due to financial limitations; and the parents are able to share in their children's development and to enrich their own lives through meaningful contributions to their community. The manual shows how parents can aid teachers, and provides guidelines for planning, implementing, and evaluating such a program. Several pages are devoted to suggested activities which may be assigned to parents, ranging from clerical tasks to large group activities. A reference list is provided for additional help in planning for parent involvement. (Author/PC)

Parent Involvement: A Key to Better Schools

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An Overview for Teachers

A child's initial learning experiences take place in the home, with his parents as the first instructors. As the child's world expands, other persons—relatives, family friends, other children, and those present through books, radio, television, and movies—play an important part in his learning. As this occurs, parents may begin to feel they are losing contact with their child, and this feeling can become especially acute when the child enters school.

Many parents experience this loss of shared activities with their child not because they are no longer interested but because they do not feel involved in the school situation. Though some parents try to counteract this—as indicated by the growing number of cooperative nursery schools in which parents take part in their child's learning and share in his growth—the doors of the elementary school are often closed to parent participation. Parents too often find they can do little in cooperation with the school and the teacher, except perhaps provide refreshments for the Christmas party or help chaperone the class picnic.

Since the school and the parents share concern for the welfare of the child, it is logical that they should develop a cooperative partnership. Creating such a partnership is the purpose of the parent involvement program—an exciting concept designed to bring parents into the classroom where they can actively take part in the education of their child. With the growing emphasis on individualized instruction, you will find there are many opportunities for parents to participate in activities which do not require the professional expertise of the teacher—but which do utilize the skills or interests parents have and do provide an enriched learning experience for the children. The parent involvement program does not attempt to replace teachers, substitute teachers, or auxiliary personnel with parents, but it can supplement and enrich their efforts with parent assistance.

Although the primary aim of the parent involvement program is to broaden

the learning opportunities of each child through increased personal attention and support, there are also advantages for the teacher, the school, and the parents. The teacher has more time to devote to the professional aspects of teaching and is able to learn more about the individual children; the school is able to obtain skills and services from parents which might not otherwise be available due to financial limitations; and the parents are able to share in their child's development and to enrich their own lives through meaningful contributions to their community. As communication between home and school increases, parents are able to learn more about, and thus come to support, the school and its programs, while school and teacher gain important information about the community and its residents.

The following discussion of such a parent involvement program—in this case at the elementary level—shows you why and how parents can aid you as a teacher, and provides guidelines for planning, implementing, and evaluating a successful program in your own community.

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Planning for Parent Involvement

No matter who initiates your parent involvement effort—teachers, parents, principals, administrators, parent organizations, local education associations, or boards of education—your local program will probably require certain advance approvals. After these basic approvals of the parent volunteer concept are received, careful planning for each program stage is essential. If your board of education or other local body must authorize such a program, keep it informed of your progress at all times—not just during the planning stage but also after your program is in effect.

THE TEACHER WORKSHOP

To be a success, your parent involvement program must have the support of teacher, principal, and administrator; to give this support, they must recognize why and where parent involvement can help them, and they must feel that it is their program. A series of workshops—including teachers, principal, and administrators—will allow participants to define their need for parent involvement, examine ways to develop a sound approach to collaborative education, and participate in the design and implementation of a truly local program.

Setting Your Goals. The two-part filmstrip *Parents and Teachers Together (for the Benefit of Children),* a comprehensive introduction to parent involvement, will stimulate discussion and other planning activities by providing a basic orientation to the program. From the filmstrip it is evident that the parent involvement program should aim to—

- Meet the needs of individual children more fully, making the educational program more flexible and thus more child-oriented through increased personal attention and assistance.
- Develop a cooperative partnership between parent and teacher for the benefit of the child.
- Enlist and strengthen parent cooperation with the school, which will increase parent support of the school and its programs.

- Create an environment which encourages two-way communication between home and school.
- Give teachers more time for professional activities, making them more effective teachers and creating a more manageable teaching role.
- Encourage experimentation with new techniques such as team teaching and with new learning materials—which might not be possible for the school without volunteer assistance.
- Provide a continuous public relations feeder system from the school through the parents to the community to create greater understanding of educational needs and goals, and to form a cultural bridge in a multiethnic setting.
- Allow parents to make a significant contribution to their children, their schools, and their community.

A discussion of these overall goals will provide useful perspectives in setting objectives for your local program. Only with specific aims in mind can you give your program needed direction and evaluate its progress. By stimulating thought about parent involvement and its purposes, the Parent Involvement Series booklet *Discussion-Starter Questions for Parents and Teachers* should also prove useful in your planning.

First, review the needs and goals of your local school—possibly through large- or small-group discussions or panels. Such analyses will help you determine the areas in which parent involvement can be of real assistance. To fulfill its potential, parent involvement must be an integral part of the school situation, and this is the time to determine how and where it can help your pupils the most. Each teacher must know why he wants the help of volunteers.

Parents' goals are important, too, and the program should be in line with these to prevent confusion among your pupils. Though parents and teachers both want the best for the child, they may differ on the ways to achieve this.

Defining the Parent Role. Once you have decided where the program is going, turn your attention to how to get there. Workshop participants should assess all teacher activities to see which are professional and must be performed by a teacher (e.g., diagnosing needs, prescribing programs, initiating activities, presenting content, counseling, evaluating students), and which are nonprofessional and may be carried out by volun-

teers (e.g., providing general assistance and support, handling clerical duties, monitoring activities, motivating students, reinforcing instruction). And this type of analysis has an added benefit—it gives teacher, principal, and administrator a chance to examine the educational process as a whole, which may point up a need for improvement having nothing to do with the parent involvement program.

These nonprofessional activities will provide the framework for the parent volunteer role, which must be defined so as to be understood by all who will be actively involved—teachers, parents, paid aides, and children. But avoid making this role so rigid or limited that it prevents growth and development as the teacher and the parent volunteers interact in the classroom setting. Flexibility should be a major characteristic of your program so that activities fit the needs of your school, your classroom, and your individual students.

Perhaps the best way to decide what specific activities fall within the scope of the parent volunteer role is through a brainstorming session. Clerical duties such as taking attendance or collecting and recording lunch money will probably come to mind first. But with a little thought and imagination you can find many other ways parents can enrich the learning environment—such as making educational games or collecting resource materials for you. Possible parent activities are presented on p. 44, and the list of selected references pertaining to volunteer programs, p. 54, should provide further ideas. But consult these only after you have listed all the ideas generated in your own workshop, for these are the activities that probably have the most relevance to your situation and your needs. No school can assign to parents all the activities we mention, nor would it want to—particularly in a new program. These are merely suggestions to supplement your own ideas and to stimulate planning.

Professional and educational stand-

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ards, of course, must be maintained. Parents should provide motivation for children, encourage receptivity to learning, and help children establish their self-images and self-confidence—but planning and carrying out the instructional program remains the responsibility of each teacher.

If there are paid aides or auxiliary personnel working in your school, guidelines should be developed for efficient cooperation between them and the parents. Conflicting functions and responsibilities will cause misunderstandings, thus weakening the parent involvement program and causing personnel difficulties. The two groups may be completely separate in their duties, or they may be woven together—for example, a paid aide might serve as a coordinator for the parent volunteer effort.

The characteristics of your community will also influence your planning with regard to the role of the volunteer and the extent of your program. Therefore, if your community has a high percentage of working parents or non-English-speaking parents or parents hostile to the school system, this will affect the number of volunteers you can expect and the jobs they will be able to perform. If it appears there will not be many volunteers initially, consider expanding your program to include grandparents or retired persons, or plan for limited volunteer assistance in only a few specific activities.

Writing careful job descriptions for volunteers will help everyone involved and cut down on the time needed for training. These descriptions should indicate what activities the volunteer will participate in, how many children he will work with and at what grade level, what materials he will use, what training he will need, and when he will work, including the number of sessions. For example, one such description might call for a parent volunteer to work on arithmetic skills, using a certain instructional method, for one hour twice a week for six weeks with four children in a particular third-grade class, after the parent has attended a school orientation and a two-hour training session. In this way, teachers can find volunteers to meet very specific needs, and parents will know what is expected of them and be able to volunteer for work which interests them.

After determining the activities parents will participate in, assess the effect of parent involvement on your school program as a whole. You will have more time for planning and for experimenting with new teaching methods if par-

ents help prepare the learning materials essential to such new approaches. Having parent volunteers may mean that the library or the audiovisual center can be open longer or offer more services. The school health program or counseling service may be expanded. There may be opportunities for more after-school activities, such as hobby or science clubs. All these new possibilities have implications for educational planning which go far beyond the parent involvement program.

Considering All the Viewpoints. As with most new ideas, there will be apprehension about the value of the parent involvement program. Following are some of the doubts or objections which may be voiced by workshop participants:

- Planning activities for volunteers will take too much time.
- Teachers will not be comfortable with parents in the classroom.
- The use of parents in instructional activities may lower the school's or the teacher's educational standards.
- Teachers will be subject to frequent parent criticism.
- The use of parent volunteers may mean that the school system will hire fewer certificated teachers than are really needed.
- Parents will try to take over teaching responsibilities.
- Parents may not follow a teacher's instructions or the school's regulations.
- Parents will disrupt the classroom and cause confusion.
- Parents may discuss confidential school information with their friends.
- Parents may not keep their volunteer commitment, creating scheduling difficulties.
- Parents may not know how to work productively with children.
- Some parents may use nonstandard English or demonstrate other characteristics which the teacher does not want to introduce into a learning situation.

While no one can predict what situations will arise, these and other problems must be considered at the outset. Workshop participants may not have definite solutions for these situations, and information from outside sources may help. The taped comments and discussions found in *Talk . . . About Parent Involvement*, also included in the Parent Involvement Series, will give you infor-

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mation about the very real benefits—and some of the problems—you may expect to experience in operating a parent involvement program. The first side of the cassette covers "What a Parent Involvement Program Can (and Can't) Do for Your School"; the second side presents comments from educators who are actually participating in existing programs in "I'm Involved in Parent Involvement."

School representatives may also want to contact or visit schools with active programs to see what difficulties were encountered and how they were handled. Such contacts may also yield valuable tips for planning and carrying out your program. Included in this booklet is a listing of some of the many schools with operating volunteer programs (see p. 54), and some of the selected reference materials (p. 51) may also be of assistance at this point.

Remember that "experience is the best teacher"—handling a problem situation is usually easier when you are actually faced with it. Too many hypothetical "if's" and "but's" now may cause your supporters to wonder whether the program has too many drawbacks. Many other teachers have felt similar doubts about bringing parents into the classroom, and to their delight, they have found that parents are more interested in helping the children than in criticizing the teachers; that they may have many good ideas for improving the school's programs; that they can work well with teachers and follow their instructions; and that they are, in fact, good teachers.

However, the program must be acceptable to all those who will be involved, and the parent involvement approach may not be best for everyone. If a teacher does not want parent volunteers, he should not be forced to have them. In the future, if he sees that the program works for other teachers, he may want to become involved—a possibility to keep in mind when planning

the extent of your initial program and its later expansion.

Establishing Program Policies. Although final planning for parents will be done by each individual teacher, there are some basic policies which should be determined by teachers, principal, and administrators together.

Time Limits: First, decide when to begin your program. The initial teacher planning is best done during the summer or several weeks after school has opened to allow for adequate preparation. There must also be sufficient time for orienting and training parents, and if volunteers are contacted after school has been in session for awhile, they will have a better idea of how much free time they have to devote to volunteer work.

Also set a completion date for the first phase of your program. A vague call for volunteers for an open-ended project will produce few responses; parents want to know how much of a commitment they are expected to make. Your *initial* phase should not extend over a long period—but be sure that it is long enough to accomplish at least short-term goals, such as providing learning materials for a specific instructional unit. This not only helps you plan your classroom schedule, but it also permits early evaluation and modification if the program is running into difficulties. Parents who do not work well in a particular classroom situation can be phased out or transferred without embarrassment, and parents who find they do not have enough time can leave the program without feeling they are disrupting your curricular plans.

Program Scope: While each teacher must determine how many volunteers he can use, workshop participants should decide whether all teachers who want parent volunteers will have them or whether some classrooms will be selected as "pilots." You should also determine whether beginning teachers will have volunteers and whether parents will be used by other school personnel, such as librarians or counselors.

School Facilities: When you have an approximate idea of the size of your program, check to see that your school's facilities are adequate. For example, chairs designed for six-year-olds will not be suitable for parents, and you may have to do some furniture rearranging. Volunteers also need their own work areas and materials—either in your classroom or elsewhere. Specific areas should be set aside where parents

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can prepare instructional materials and the like. Parents will need a definite place to keep their personal belongings, and as your program grows, a lounge for parent volunteers will be appreciated.

Volunteer Requirements: The basic qualifications for a parent volunteer are interest in education and the community, a desire to help, dependability, commitment to the program, enjoyment of children, and good health. However, you may want to add other requirements, ask for references, or screen potential volunteers, particularly if you plan to use them in tutorial or remedial programs. This screening should serve only to provide a basis for assigning responsibilities and not for rejecting those who wish to help; there is always a place for every interested parent to make a contribution.

You might decide to ask volunteers to sign some type of statement of commitment, indicating that they will work for a certain period of time, that they will undergo necessary orientation and training, that they will adhere to school regulations, and so forth. This will put your program on a more businesslike level and remind both parents and teachers of their mutual commitment.

Record Keeping: Arranging a system for parent volunteers to sign in and out at the school office is helpful if parents need to be contacted during their working hours. Parents also may be asked to keep individual time cards; if you have a record of how much volunteer assistance you have received, you can bet-

ter assess your results and the effectiveness of your utilization of volunteers. At this point, you may want to set up a committee to develop forms and other materials relating to the volunteer program, including application forms, time sheets, information records, and evaluation questionnaires.

Classroom Assignment: One area of concern is whether or not a parent will work in the classroom with his own child. Usually this will not create problems and, in fact, may encourage more parents to come into the school by making them feel more comfortable. The school may wish to establish a policy on this or leave the decision to the teacher involved. One of the benefits of the program is the increased sharing of experiences by parent and child; but if the personality of the child is such that he would resent his parents' attention to other children in his class or if you feel parents would interfere in your instruction of their children, the situation is best avoided. Each parent will still become familiar with the types of experiences his child has, even though he is in another classroom, and this will lead to greater communication and understanding between them.

Special Training: If parents will be participating in special education activities—assisting remedial reading teachers or speech therapists, for example—they may need extra instruction beyond the parent orientation session discussed later. Advance arrangements should be made for any training requiring outside specialists; if more than one school in your area is using parent volunteers in special education, a training session for all parents at a centralized location in your district will save time and avoid duplication of effort.

Program Control: In planning how you will utilize parents, remember that ultimate control of the parent involvement program, and thus ultimate responsibility for its success or failure, must rest with your principal and with you, the teacher. It is your support and enthusiasm which will inspire parents to make the program work, and it is your guid-

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ance which will determine whether you achieve the goals you have set.

THE PARENT-TEACHER WORKSHOP

When your initial planning is completed, parent interest must be generated and maintained. This is best accomplished through a parent-teacher workshop—again with principal and administrators present—at which you can outline your proposed program, answer questions, and assess community reactions which will be useful in the final planning stages. To stimulate interest in volunteer involvement, you might try distributing a leaflet to all parents, indicating the areas in which the school needs help and inviting them to attend your parent-teacher workshop. Posters, developed as part of the Parent Involvement Series to promote your program, can also be displayed in the school and around the community, or you can place a notice in your local newspaper.

Carefully developed workshop plans are essential to an interesting, informative, and well-organized presentation. Your audience will consist of potential volunteers, and the effectiveness of this meeting will determine whether or not you will have the parent support and involvement vital to your success. A suggested workshop format is presented in the Parent Involvement Series booklet *Teachers and Parents Together for Kids—A Workshop Plan.* Whatever workshop activities you plan, encourage parent-teacher interaction and allow for input from those parents who will ask questions before a large audience as well as from those who are more at home in small-group situations.

Begin your workshop with a viewing of the first part of the filmstrip *Parents and Teachers Together (for the Benefit of Children),* which stresses the importance of the parent volunteer effort. If a parent involvement program has been in operation previously in your community, show some slides of parents working in your local schools. Supplement this presentation with remarks by principal or teachers as to the direction your local program is taking. Discussion of appropriate questions from *Discussion-Starter Questions for Parents and Teachers* should provide a good general background for consideration of the specific issues below. Also, give parents copies of the brochure "Get Involved in Your Child's School," one of the components in the Parent Involvement Series, which will answer some of their questions about volunteer involvement.

The Child. The major focus of the parent-

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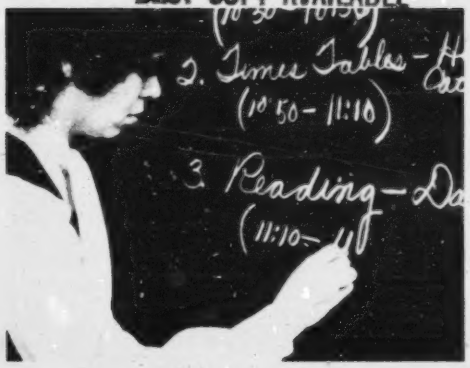

teacher workshop should be on the individual child and how he will benefit from the extra personal attention and the enriched learning program which parent involvement provides. The personal attention a parent gives may well cause a child to realize his own worth and his ability to achieve. While parents may feel that they will go into the classroom as teacher helpers, stress that—more importantly—they will be pupil helpers.

The Program. Present the needs and problems of your school fairly and show parents how they can help alleviate undesirable situations such as lack of individualized attention, mushrooming paper work, or a shortage of curriculum materials. They must understand their value in giving the teacher time to teach.

Be prepared, however, to answer those who question the value of parent participation. They may feel that such a project will disrupt the learning situation or that the school spends too much time experimenting with programs when it should get down to the business of teaching—using traditional methods parents are familiar with. These and other issues should be dealt with in an effort to increase communication between parents and school personnel. If parents feel their legitimate concerns are ignored now, they will react negatively to your future efforts.

Activities. Discuss the types of activities being planned for volunteers so parents can see how these coincide with their own skills and interests. Emphasize that there are two types of volunteer work open to parents: the first involves continuing scheduled activities in the school; the second allows parents to participate as resource persons or helpers on a one-time basis for a specific activity, perhaps sharing special experiences, travels, hobbies, skills, or talents. Of course, actual duties will be arranged by the teachers in cooperation with the parents, but they should be given an idea of the variety of opportunities awaiting them at school. Parents

should realize that they will not be stuck in a "clerical rut" and that at least part of their time will be spent working directly with the children. Point out special activities for working mothers and fathers so they will see that everyone can help in some way—whether it is directly by working with children or indirectly by helping schedule activities by telephone, making classroom materials at home, or taking an hour from work to record a filmstrip narration.

Parent Commitment. Point out that parents will not be expected to spend a lot of time in the classroom. They will work out their schedules with the teachers they are assisting, and they can spend as little as an hour a month working in the program. Also indicate the length of the program so potential volunteers will know how much of a commitment they must make. Parents should understand that the amount of time they give will not determine your appreciation of their efforts; the contribution of each parent is equally valuable to the children involved.

Volunteer Benefits. Finally, make parents aware of how their assistance will affect their own lives—through sharing with their children, learning more about their educational system, and contributing to their community. The parent involvement program is a learning experience for all who take part.

During your parent-teacher workshop, encourage parents' understanding and support of your program. Stimulate them to want to play an active role in their children's education and to involve parents not attending the workshop. But also seek parent ideas. They must realize that while the school is organizing the program, it is really their program, too—just as the schools are the community's schools. To foster the partnership between parent and teacher, parent ideas and viewpoints must be considered in your planning. Parents may have valuable suggestions on contacting volunteers or on what activities they are prepared to participate in. If parents see that their contributions are welcomed in the planning phase, they will be more willing to support the final product.

After discussing the many aspects of your parent volunteer program, you may want to distribute application forms for parents to fill out and return, indicating what activities they are interested in. In this way, when you are ready to actually implement your plans, you will have a ready pool of volunteers.

Involving Parents in Your School

TEACHER PREPARATION

Making Individual Plans. At this point, responsibility for final planning and implementation of your parent involvement program shifts to you, the teacher. Analyze the needs of your students to see how volunteers can enrich your specific instructional plans. Then decide how many volunteers you need, how often, and for what activities.

Parent volunteers are usually happier, feel more useful, and are more successful when assigned specific duties. Telling a parent to walk around the room and help anyone who needs it will only create frustration and a sense of not really being needed. The same is true for greeting a parent with "My, what am I going to do with you today?" or having him wait around for an hour while you get organized. While making such detailed plans may take extra time now, this will diminish as you learn how and where to involve parents and as they become familiar with the school setting. Also, make an effort to give parents a variety of responsibilities, and allow a certain amount of time for them to work directly with the children. After all, that is why the parents are there, and that is where they will receive the most personal satisfaction from their work.

Whatever instructional plans you make, keep your principal informed at all times. He can provide you with valuable advice and information, and keeping him abreast of your progress will help him to answer parents' questions and to promote the program in the community. By being aware of your plans and activities, he will be able to help orient volunteers, he will have background information necessary to help you solve problems, and he can see that school guidelines are followed in order to meet your goals.

Contacting Volunteers. The next step is to decide whom to invite and how to get in touch with them. It is a good idea first to become familiar with your students and their family situations, as well as with the community as a whole. The

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more knowledge you have of the community, the better you can utilize its potential resources.

You can begin by contacting parents who have already shown interest in your program, particularly through participation in the parent-teacher workshop. If you are hesitant about having volunteers in your classroom, first try calling in one parent whom you already know. However, if you decide to issue a general invitation to all parents by personal note or form letter, enclose a response card for interested parents to fill out and return, providing you with information on what activities they want to participate in, what skills or experience they have to contribute, and when they are available. Again, the Parent Involvement Series posters should be useful in making community residents aware of your program.

Experience has shown that a personal invitation generally brings the best results since parents will respond to your interest and enthusiasm. You can contact your parents at fall registration, school open houses or other social functions, and parent-teacher conferences; by telephone; or during home visits. The latter two have an advantage in that they place parents in a more comfortable setting, whereas the more formal contacts in the school building may inhibit parent-teacher communication. If your program has been in operation for some time, you may have a volunteer coordinator who can contact parents for

you. In any case, do not try to involve more parent volunteers than you can adequately plan for and utilize, particularly during your initial phase.

There are several other factors to keep in mind when deciding whom to invite. Do not rely too heavily on parents who are substitute teachers. Though experienced, they may be called to work at the last minute, leaving you without the help you planned for. Also, though former teachers have the advantage of an education background and require less orientation and instruction, weigh

your own feelings about having another person in your classroom who may have his own ideas about methods and subject matter. Caution parents involved in clubs or community service groups to examine their previous commitments carefully; they may find they are spreading themselves over too many activities, and if they have to leave the program later due to lack of time, this will again have an adverse effect on your planning.

Encouraging Participation. However you contact parents, explain the parent involvement program and its purposes, benefits, values, and goals. Indicate your interest in and support of each parent's contributions, no matter how limited. Highlight those aspects of your program which relate to the parents' interests. Encourage them to ask questions, and make them aware of your confidence in them. If you have developed any printed materials (job descriptions, program highlights, calendars of events, newsletters, etc.), distribute these or copies of the leaflet "Get Involved in Your Child's School" to your prospective volunteers. Explain what specific help is needed and what training they will be given to help them feel more confident. Stress that without them there can be no program.

Be prepared to discuss reasons why parents might not feel they can contribute to your program effort—for example:

- If parents fear the school situation, perhaps due to childhood experiences, they must be reassured of your concern and support. Give special emphasis to the concern for the children which you and the parents share, so they feel you will appreciate their help.
- Some parents may feel that education is the school's job, or they may not agree with your school's methods or programs. Under such circumstances, stress the benefits of parent involvement, and urge communication and observation to bring about new understandings.
- Parents with preschool children may need encouragement to share babysitting chores with other volunteers.
- If transportation is not available, put parents in touch with others to ride with. If you have many volunteers, you might appoint a transportation chairman to handle these details.
- Those who do not speak English can work with another parent who speaks their language, if you do not. Point out that there are areas where they

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can help and that this would be an excellent opportunity for them to learn English from you and the children.

- Working parents may not realize there are many ways they can become involved. Invite them to spend even an hour or two a month in the classroom and to participate in activities in the evenings and on weekends.
- Parents who feel that they are too busy might be asked to spend short periods of time helping on an irregular basis. In this way, their absence will not disrupt your schedule, and they may find that they really do have the time to be part of such a beneficial program.

When a parent volunteers to come into the classroom, stress once more the importance of his keeping the commitment for the length of the program—you will be scheduling activities in light of his promised help, and children will be looking forward enthusiastically to the new experiences he will provide for them. Remember, however, that while some parents may leave the program because they do not have the time, oth-

ers may leave because they are bored, do not feel useful, or do not experience a sense of achievement as a result of their efforts. Volunteers demonstrate their concern and dedication through their efforts to help you and your pupils, and they need your encouragement and inspiration at all times. Parent "drop-outs" weaken your overall program, and maintaining parent interest and enthusiasm requires your efforts—particularly in careful planning—as well as theirs.

PARENT ORIENTATION

Your volunteers can make an important contribution to your school—but their effectiveness depends largely on skillful professional guidance and development of their potential. Parents will get acquainted with your school more quickly and become better volunteers if they feel welcome, have your careful guidance, know what is expected of them, have help in developing good relationships with your pupils, are acquainted with all the information and procedures vital to performing their duties, and are busy and actively involved.

When you have your volunteers, arrange a parent orientation session as soon as possible, again including your principal. Because there is much material to cover and parents will have questions, you may want to hold several short meetings rather than one marathon session.

Since this session will be the first real contact with the school for many parents, you will want to make a good first impression. Organize the material you must cover in advance and make up an agenda; also notify any speakers so they will be prepared. An agenda sheet or orientation checklist given to the parents will help them follow your presentation. An effective orientation session is essential to laying the groundwork for an effective parent-teacher partnership.

In order to facilitate scheduling, when each parent arrives, he should first fill out a card indicating his address, telephone number, days and hours he can work, special skills or interests he has which would be useful in enriching your curriculum, previous work experience (paid or volunteer), and any other information you feel pertinent. If parents are working with only one teacher, these reference cards can be kept in his classroom. But if parents will rotate among teachers as they are needed or if some will act as resource persons for particular subjects rather than as regular helpers, keep your file of parents' cards where all teachers will have access to it. Remember that any information on vol-

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unteers' abilities and talents will help you determine where they will be most useful in your instructional program.

Familiarizing Parents with Your School. While volunteers will be somewhat familiar with your parent involvement program and its goals by this time, a review will be useful. The program will have more meaning for them now in terms of their own behavior, and they may have additional questions. Ask parents what they consider important about what they are doing, and discuss these ideas in terms of your program's goals. Find out what objectives volunteers want to fulfill and what skills or knowledge they want to gain from their participation, and relate these to the services the school needs.

Parents may also find a brief discussion of the school budget and sources of income, district tax limits, the school system's current and future needs, and the like helpful in understanding the value of the voluhteer program. Stressing the importance of each citizen's contribution to his schools will add to their feeling of being needed and appreciated.

The basic philosophy of the school curriculum should be outlined, and any experimental programs or materials which are in use should be explained—

by the curriculum director, your principal, or one of the teachers. If parents will be involved in monitoring and checking tests, for example, they should understand the function of these in planning the educational program and evaluating students.

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Acquaint parents with the organizational pattern and schedule of the school, as well as of the classrooms in which they will be working; school attendance requirements; school calendar; behavior and discipline standards; regulations observed in school facilities such as the library, cafeteria, auditorium, and media center, on the playgrounds, and during trips away from school; socioeconomic, cultural, or ethnic composition of the student body; services available to students—e.g., counseling, health care, speech therapy, remedial and tutorial programs, etc.; time cards, sign-in sheets, and other forms volunteers must complete; and accident or emergency policies and procedures. Explain health requirements for parent volunteers and school and teacher liability (as determined by your board of education as well as by state or local laws), along with more basic information on where to park, where to report when they come to the school, arrangements for meals, use of the school phone, and whom to contact if they cannot come when scheduled. This and other information can be typed up as a series of handouts to be placed in a parent volunteer kit, or much of it may already be contained in your school

handbook, which you can distribute to parents. If you do not have such a handbook, this would be a good time to develop one—perhaps with volunteer help—to give to new teachers and school visitors in addition to volunteers.

A tour of the school premises will ac-

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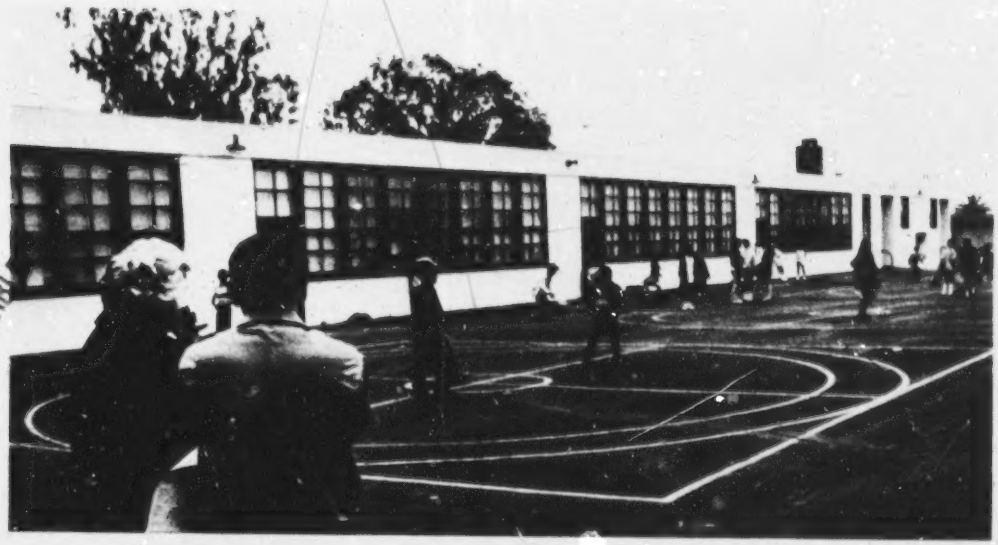

quaint parents with the location of the library, various offices, supply areas, workrooms, emergency exits, cafeteria, auditorium, gymnasium, and other facilities; parents may find a map of your school layout helpful until they learn their way around. This tour also gives parents a chance to meet all the teachers, librarians, counselors, secretaries, cafeteria workers, custodians, and other school personnel who can assist them; if parents are able to get to know these people, they will have a better opportunity to become accepted members of the school staff.

Explaining the Parent Role. Outline clearly the role and responsibilities of parents to avoid misunderstandings. Parents must know whom they are accountable to, what channels of communication are open to them, and what limits will be placed on them and why; cover any legal or school policy limitations on the use of noncertificated personnel at this point. Volunteers are there to motivate students, to stimulate their desire to learn, and to assist them, but they are not expected to take over the functions of the teacher. Of course, you must explain this tactfully since some

parents may feel qualified to do things which, in reality, require professional expertise which only the teacher possesses.

A former teacher can be a valuable volunteer because of his background and knowledge, but he must understand that his is now the subordinate role in your classroom. If parents are aware of how they will be involved initially and whether there will be opportunities to participate in more complex learning activities as they gain skill and confidence, they will be less likely to feel underutilized. Also, if there are paid aides working in your school, explain any distinction between aide and volunteer responsibilities.

A discussion of educational ethics and the parents' responsibility to the school, the student, the program, and the community is particularly appropriate. Parents must understand that they, like the teachers, are bound by professional principles regarding disclosure of any confidential information they may have about teachers or students, political activities in the school, and other sensitive areas. Parents should be aware of the attitudes, appearance, and standards of conduct that are expected of them, both in the school and in the community.

Discussing Pupil Characteristics. With the above background, parents are ready to learn more about what will happen when they actually begin working in the classroom. Have your school psychologist, counselor, pupil personnel worker, or a teacher discuss briefly how children grow and develop physically, socially, emotionally, and mentally. If parents are to help constructively, they need a grasp of the characteristics of children in the age groups they will work with and of how these children learn. Explain how

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to recognize physical or behavioral disorders which should be brought to your attention. In addition, make parents aware of how to cope with the many reactions children may have—aggression, indifference, testing, dependence, etc.—to new adults in the classroom.

Of course, it is natural for parents to expect to see children benefit from their help, and they may look for learning improvements on their own. If they think it is their responsibility to bring about and measure rapid learning advances, they may become disappointed or frustrated if the children do not meet their expectations. Stress that evaluation of student progress is entirely your responsibility and should not be attempted by parents; their function is to inform you regularly of any learning difficulties or achievements they observe in the children they work with, not to interpret these. Pupil learning advances may be small and slow in coming, but they are nonetheless extremely important and can be accurately assessed only by a professional.

Introducing Methods and Materials. Next, demonstrate the various techniques and materials you use in presenting different subjects. Parents need to understand the purposes of these various techniques—which may be very different from the ones they experienced as children—and how these relate to what is known about how children learn. Also, point out what educational resources are available and who can assist them in locating and using these. This will acquaint volunteers with what happens in the classroom and show them the areas in which they can reinforce your instruction.

At this time, volunteers should be given any special training they will need to assist you. In addition to showing parents how to operate audiovisual or duplicating equipment, discuss its many purposes in instruction. If parents will help in special education programs for children with learning disabilities, teach them how to use remedial materials. Making overhead transparencies and other instructional aids will require some extra explanation to ensure that what is made can be used to enrich your curriculum. The more preparation you can give parents outside the classroom—both now and during future in-service training sessions—the less time you will have to take from your planning and teaching activities.

Presenting Guidelines for Parents. As a final step in the orientation process, you should review what will be expected of

parents in terms of behavior and attitudes. To help you present the following guidelines clearly, a set of overhead transparencies (with suggested narration) entitled *Basic Guidelines for Parent Volunteers* is included in the Parent Involvement Series.

- *Respect school policies:* Parents' actions should be guided at all times by the role outlined for them, and they should learn and carefully adhere to school goals, policies, and procedures. This is also true in the classroom. Parents build on the efforts of the school and the teacher; they help motivate childern, but teachers initiate learning activities designed to accomplish specific goals. Instruct your volunteers not to cover additional material or assign work you have not called for. Also caution parents not to ask children to do anything which is contrary to school rules or which is physically dangerous, such as climbing on a chair to close a window.
- *Give children appropriate encouragement:* Parents can help children greatly by giving them opportunities to make decisions and express their creativity. They are not there to do children's work for them.
- *Discipline is the teacher's responsibility:* Just as you are responsible for instructing the children, you are ultimately responsible for maintaining discipline standards in your classroom—even if the parent's own child is involved. Parents should maintain order when assisting children in assigned activities and enforce rules only as you specifically instruct them. All disciplinary problems should be referred to you immediately. Remind parents that unwanted behavior can be effectively discouraged by rejecting the behavior, not the child.
- *Follow education's code of ethics:* Stress the confidential nature of the parents' relationship with the school. Discussion of confidential matters and criticism of the professional staff, the pupils, or the parent involvement program and its participants are inappropriate outside the school. Instead, discuss your concerns with the professional staff. By acting in a professional manner, volunteers will earn the respect of both teachers and students.
- *Avoid evaluating children:* Children learn through a progression of building up blocks of knowledge, and progress may be some time in coming. It is not the parents' responsibility to judge student competence, although

they should keep you informed of progress or difficulties which children experience. Final evaluation of a child's learning must be done by you, the professional.

- *Get to know the children:* Perhaps the most important qualification for a parent volunteer is fondness for children. The quality of the rapport parents establish with children will directly affect your success. Children must feel comfortable with parents, but volunteers should not try to win children's affection from the teacher. The classroom is a place for cooperative efforts for learning, not a popularity contest. Encourage parents to understand and accept students as they are, taking into consideration their backgrounds, values, and aspirations which may be very different from those of their own children.

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- *Give deserved praise:* In any activity a child will probably do something worthy of a compliment. But the praise must be genuine and deserved; children will recognize and resent both false praise and a condescending attitude. Parents can help children fulfill their needs to achieve and gain self-respect if criticism is replaced by positive remarks, patience, and kindness.
- *Provide motivation through individual attention:* Parents must encourage children if they are to reinforce your instruction. Explain techniques which they can use to maintain interest and stimulate children to ask questions and exchange ideas. Parents should emphasize their concern for the children by using each child's name in conversation with him, by giving everyone an opportunity to participate, and by helping each child be successful in some activity.
- *Be consistent and objective:* Parents' words and actions should always be consistent and objective. A sense of fair play is essential, and for this reason, they should avoid becoming emotionally involved with any child or spending more time with their own child. Parents should be equally concerned for all and never take sides in arguments between children.
- *Be honest with children:* It may be hard for a parent to tell a child he cannot answer a question. But if he is not honest and tries to hide the fact that he does not know the answer, the child will lose respect for him. An important value of the parent involvement program—parent-child interaction to increase the child's motivation and receptivity to learning—will be lessened if the child feels he cannot rely on the parent. Above all, parents should never make a promise to a child that they cannot fulfill.
- *Respect the child and his privacy:* A child's homelife should not be discussed unless he brings it up; probing questions will be resented and may cause the child to withdraw. If a child reveals something to a parent in confidence, this confidence should be kept unless it is something vital for you to know—and even then, this situation must be handled very carefully so that the child does not come to distrust you or the parents.
- *Be a good listener:* Having someone to pay attention to their ideas is important to children. Parents should be relaxed, unhurried, and attentive; they

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should also learn how to be comfortable with silences, giving children a chance to think and organize what they want to say.

- *Be an effective volunteer:* If parents need information or instruction, if they want to discuss a problem they cannot handle, or if they wonder whether they are effectively helping you and the children, you are there to assist them. They should not be afraid to ask if they do not understand what they are to do, or if they feel they need their duties changed. You should see that they feel comfortable coming to you for help—that they are not afraid you will criticize their efforts. In return, parents should avoid criticizing teachers or the school in both the classroom and the community. They should encourage children to have positive attitudes toward school and teacher, and thus they must not be critical of the educational system in an attempt to identify with the children. If parents question the value of your methods or actions, ask them to discuss it with you privately.
- *Share ideas with the teacher:* Besides keeping you informed of the results of their classroom activities which you have assigned, parents should feel free to present their own ideas or suggestions. They may provide valuable new perspectives; let them know that you welcome their constructive comments about the educational program.
- *Be thoroughly prepared:* Stress that parents must fully understand the purpose of and the way to carry out each of their duties. If they are not prepared for an activity, the children will not benefit from it as much as they might. While adequate preparation for classroom activities—with your help and guidance—may require a little more

time or effort from your parents, remind them that this is a vital part of the volunteer's responsibility to the school, the teacher, and the children.

- *Get the most out of your involvement:* If parents are relaxed and natural with children, both will benefit from their new experiences. Encourage parents to view your parent involvement program as a way to learn new skills, make new friends, and improve their community through the schools.
- *Maintain a sense of humor:* Children appreciate adults who can laugh—with others and even at themselves. Education is no longer thought of as an experience that must be serious and without joy—but good for you. Education today is fun. It is personally fulfilling. And it allows children to express themselves in new, creative, and exciting ways. However, not everything can be laughed off; what seems to be an amusing incident to an adult may be a major catastrophe to a child's sensitive ego.

- *Calm is best:* Children, particularly younger ones, are easily excited by any break in their usual routine. Parents can be a calming influence in any unusual or emergency situation by knowing what to do and where to get help if it is needed.
- *Your attitude is important:* Parents should leave personal problems at home; they should avoid discussing personal concerns or family life with both staff and pupils. Their volunteer work should have the understanding and approval of their families, or they may have difficulties in meeting their obligations. Parents should also adhere to any dress limitations and present a neat appearance as an example for the children. Clothing should be comfortable and appropriate for the activities they are involved in.

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- *Keep your commitment:* If a parent cannot come, ask him to notify you immediately so you can adjust your schedule. On the other hand, be sure to call volunteers promptly if you will not be needing them as scheduled—their time is valuable, too. If you must be absent, let parents know whether they will work with your substitute teacher (be sure to tell your substitute what volunteers should do), help another regular teacher, or not come at all that day. Parents will be expected to participate for the complete phase of the program to ensure that the children receive maximum benefits and to facilitate planning. Of course, unforeseen circumstances may cause a parent to leave the program. Emphasize that you understand these difficulties and that such a withdrawal would not mean the parent could not rejoin your program at a later date. The important factor to stress is that the children will come to expect the extra attention parents provide and will be disappointed if this attention ends suddenly.

In concluding the formal orientation session, try to answer any parent questions honestly. But if you are just beginning your program, you will probably have to admit there are many answers you don't have yet. You might want to plan future meetings with parents during the program to handle such questions; after they have been involved in the school situation, they may also need further information or instruction. Orienting and training parents should be a continuous process. A reference library of articles, books, and pamphlets of interest to volunteers might be organized —perhaps by the volunteers themselves —to give parents a place to find information on parent involvement or education in general.

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If parents have not yet been assigned to help specific staff members, do this now. If at all possible, these assignments should be determined in advance—based on teachers' requests and parents' expressed desires to help in specific areas—and announced at the orientation session. Then take a few minutes to get acquainted with your volunteers (parents may have volunteered in response to a call from your volunteer coordinator or a general letter from the school) and briefly discuss future plans—e.g., working schedule, responsibilities, training sessions, etc. Finally, allow time for volunteers to get to know one another. This provides an opportunity for them to set up car pools, arrange to share baby-sitting duties, or just discuss their views of parent involvement—thus giving them a sense of cohesiveness and cooperation.

PARENTS AT WORK

Orienting Your Students. After the planning and parent preparation, your volunteers are now ready to help you. However, there is one important step before parents come into your classroom—explaining the program to the children. Some children will already know their parents are coming to work at school—but they and their classmates probably do not know why. Explain why the parents will be there and how parents can help them learn in school as well as at home. Your class will also feel more involved if you show them how they can help parents by introducing them to friends or by showing them where classroom supplies are kept. Emphasize to your students that the parents deserve

the same respect that you do as a teacher.

Establishing Your Classroom Routine. The group orientation which your volunteers have experienced is, of course, important, but it cannot replace teacher-parent interaction and preparation. When the parents come to your classroom for the first time, give them an opportunity to observe and to get acquainted with the children, the classroom itself, and your daily routine. This should not take more than one or two visits. As soon as parents feel self-confident, involve them in class activities immediately or they will lose interest. While initial observation is valuable, they will learn far more by actually participating.

Your program should allow parents as well as children to gain self-respect, so make every effort to give each volunteer work which he will be successful at, and which will stimulate his growth through challenging experiences; again, this requires you to have a thorough knowledge of the skills, experiences, interests, and needs of your volunteers—who will have strengths and weaknesses just as your students do. Keep beginning parent activities informal and simple enough to ensure their success—probably involving each parent with only one or two children. Do not let parents try to do too much at once; they may feel inadequate if they cannot get everything done, and such frustration will be discouraging. As parents gain skill and confidence and feel more secure—primarily through your support and help—they can gradually be placed in more complex learning situations. Encourage volunteers to accept new responsibilities when they are ready, to try new methods and skills, and to meet new challenges. If possible, give parents a chance to try out their own ideas—with your prior approval.

As your program becomes more established, your own classroom organizational pattern will emerge. During your advance planning sessions with parents, you may want to assign them specific activities to be completed at certain times. If you prefer a more informally structured situation, you may want to create a "job box," recording necessary activities on slips of paper for parents to choose as they complete each job during their prearranged working hours. The important thing to keep in mind when planning is that volunteers should have a definite scheduled time to work and should take part in activities which will use this time to the best advantage.

A volunteer parent "journal" can be a useful tool for parent and teacher. If parents record what activities they have completed, along with their comments, you will know better how parents are doing, what subject areas need more emphasis or which children need special help, and whether parents have too much or too little to do. On this basis, you can tailor your program to better meet your children's and your parents' needs, as well as your own.

While much of the material here relates to the parent as a regular volunteer in the school, keep in mind that parents can also serve as resource persons on an occasional basis. Parents with special talents or experiences can enrich almost any subject area if their skills are utilized effectively. Discuss a parent's presentation with him in advance to make sure it is appropriate for your classwork and for the grade level of your students. Also, find out if he will need any special equipment or assistance so you will be prepared when he arrives in the classroom. Plan introductory lessons, which will acquaint the children with the material the parent will present, as well as follow-up activities to reinforce what they have learned and to relate this to your current lessons.

However you involve parents in the classroom, you will now have more time for planning learning activities and working with children. This new-found time should be used to the fullest advantage; avoid relying too heavily on volunteers or becoming remote from your students. You should never use the program as a means of shifting responsibility for problem students to someone else.

Helping Your Volunteers. Even routine jobs can become important to volunteers if they understand how their tasks will help the school as a whole. Dis-

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cuss with each parent the purpose of what he is doing and why it is important. If you carefully consider the importance and purpose of each activity as you prepare to explain it to parents, your planning should result in more useful and relevant parent participation, and eliminate "busywork" jobs.

Explain each task which you assign to a parent volunteer carefully, adapting your instructions to the type of activity. Obviously, making a chart will take more explanation than distributing art supplies. Provide samples of work, if possible, or demonstrate the task to be performed. In any event, cover all the details parents must know and answer questions clearly. Assuming parents should "know" something which is very familiar to you may result in time spent doing a job incorrectly. If your program is to really benefit the children, this instruction should take as little class time as possible. For this reason, ask volunteers to arrive a few minutes early or to allow some time during lunch or after school for planning and preparation.

After parents begin their actual work, they will be under your direction and will need some supervision to see that they are following instructions and that lesson objectives are being achieved. Your observations will also tell you when parents are ready to participate in more advanced activities and when they are experiencing difficulties which need your attention. However, this supervision need not be so constant that it makes the parent feel uncomfortable or takes time away from your own responsibilities.

While you should be available at all times to answer parents' questions and help solve problems, schedule occasional individual conferences and group discussions (sometimes with your principal) to review program results, establish goals for future activities, and exchange ideas. This will keep the program running smoothly and prevent minor problems from growing. For example, if a parent has a high absence rate or if his behavior is not always appropriate to the situation, discuss this tactfully with him. He may not realize that he is not acting in the best interest of the children and will usually appreciate your advice—if it is offered in a constructive and friendly way.

Also, try to keep parents up to date on school occurrences and developments in the educational program. They are obviously interested in your school and will feel more involved if you share this information with them. Many school systems hold regular informal coffees

for teachers and volunteers to foster better communication and cooperation.

Increasing Parent Involvement. If your initial efforts in involving parents are producing desired results, you may want to expand your program. You can contact additional volunteers (who would go through the same orientation as present volunteers). If you hold workshops to recruit new parents, let your working volunteers present their stories and encourage others to participate. You can also utilize those volunteers you have in new ways to produce a more child-oriented curriculum. You will benefit most from volunteers' assistance if you continue to help them improve their skills by attending relevant faculty meetings and in-service workshops.

As your program grows, a volunteer coordinator—whether principal, vice-principal, counselor, teacher, paid aide, or parent volunteer—will be beneficial and, in fact, may have a definite effect on your overall success. Such a coordinator should be carefully selected by the school staff to work closely and

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meet regularly with the staff and the volunteers. Your coordinator should be, above all, tactful and patient, and have the time to devote to keeping the program running effectively. He can maintain reference files on present and potential volunteers; assist during orientation sessions; help recruit parents and arrange working schedules, so as to find the right parent for each job; coordinate baby-sitting or transportation; keep attendance records and other forms for each parent; call in stand-by volunteers in case parents cannot come as scheduled, inform volunteers if they will not be needed on assigned days, and replace parents who must leave the program; maintain records on and schedule resource persons; organize in-service learning opportunities; listen to parents' suggestions or problems; maintain a collection of resource materials to aid volunteers; help with program evaluation by questionnaire, discussion, or interview; handle correspondence related to the program; compile informational materials for teachers, volunteers, and those interested in learning more about your program; arrange for speakers to tell community groups about your program; prepare periodic reports on your program's progress; and help the school express its appreciation to the volunteers, individually and as a group. Because the coordinator is a liaison between volunteer and teacher, he can be particularly helpful in discussing problems in parent behavior and the like, when such might be resented or misunderstood coming from the teacher.

Expressing Your Appreciation. A final tip in working with parent volunteers—it is extremely important to continually let your parents know just how much you appreciate the time and effort they are contributing, not simply because it allows you to be a more effective teacher, but also because it means so much to the children they are working with. In addition to personally telling them this, some schools have held dinners or parties honoring parents, introduced them at assemblies or school programs, mentioned them in school newsletters or community newspapers, or presented them with pins or certificates. Volunteers also would welcome thank-you notes from your pupils, written either as a class or individually. Happy and successful volunteers are your best public relations representatives for the parent involvement program by encouraging others to take part and by supporting the school's efforts to provide a better education for all children.

Evaluating Your Involvement Program

At certain times, the progress of your parent involvement program should be assessed—by the teachers, principal, parents, administrators, outside observers, and even children. The administrators and the principal will be particularly concerned that the program is meeting the goals established for it—since they are expected to advocate and clarify the school's programs in the community. Consider the structure of your program as well as its content—is the time the staff puts in justified by the performance of the volunteers and the children? If your program is not meeting its goals, some replanning may be necessary, or perhaps more realistic short-term goals are needed. Observations by visiting instructional specialists will provide useful new perspectives in evaluating your results.

As a teacher, decide if instruction is really more individualized, if you have more time for professional work, if parents really help you to be a more effective teacher. Assess your own reactions to the program now that it is in operation, and whether you are comfortable directing and working with parents. You may find that you will need to spend more time planning for and with parents or establishing relationships more conducive to cooperation and communication.

Evaluate each parent in terms of attitude, appearance, acceptance of responsibility, willingness to learn new skills, receptivity to constructive suggestions, and ability to work with both children and school personnel. Also consider the success of your volunteers—whether they have good rapport with children, what areas they are most and least helpful in, and so forth. If a parent does not work well in a room with his own child or if his personality is not suited to your classroom situation, he may need to be given other duties.

Ask participating parents if they feel overutilized or underutilized and whether they feel they are receiving enough instruction to carry out their responsibilities. Encourage parents to examine their own performance in light of the

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objectives they have set for themselves. They should consider their preparation for activities, their concern for each child and his particular needs, their success using various techniques, their attitudes toward and relationship with you, their fulfillment of the volunteer role, and their adherence to program policies. Then offer suggestions on what might be done differently—by you as well as by the parent—in the future. As a result, you may have to reschedule activities or provide more guidance.

Parents may find that they are happier in a very specific learning situation —e.g., some parents are more comfortable reading with one child, while others want to organize creative dramatic exercises or supervise playground activities. Again, these feelings will have important implications in your planning for parents. If parents do not think there is increased communication with the teacher, you will both have to put extra effort into creating the best relationship possible. By seeking volunteer viewpoints, you again emphasize that parents are personally developing along with the program which they are helping the school to create.

The children might be asked for their

reactions to the new adults and the new classroom activities, or your own observations can provide a key to their opinions. Whether they appear happy with volunteer parents or bored or confused is a good indicator. Nonparticipating parents might also be asked if their children have made any comments about the program at home.

As your program continues, looking at your volunteer turnover is a good way to measure your success. If many volunteers leave, either because of expressed complaints or without explanation, reassess the effectiveness of each stage of your program to see where the reasons for dissatisfaction lie. If teachers who did not want volunteers originally remain uninvolved or if participating teachers decide to stop using volunteers, make an effort to find out why they feel parents are ineffective or unnecessary. On the other hand, if the number of volunteers is increasing and more teachers are asking to participate, all your planning and preparation have probably provided a good foundation on which your program can grow and develop.

Evaluation of your parent involvement program may take the form of written reports, questionnaires, individual conferences, or group discussions. Whatever mechanisms are employed for observation and feedback, they should not entail a lot of paper work, particularly for the teachers, or you will be defeating your whole purpose. Emphasis should be on action for improvement and growth rather than on precise statistical tables of results which may or may not be valuable in future planning.

If your program is to succeed, it must be flexible enough to allow for changes which periodic evaluations indicate are needed. Continuing workshops and discussion sessions involving parents, teachers, principal, and administrators will facilitate an exchange of experiences and ideas—an exchange resulting in increased learning for those involved and in an educational program better designed to grow and meet the needs of individual children.

It cannot be stressed too often that the parent involvement program will be your program and it must evolve from the needs of your school. These guidelines can only provide basic direction and stimulate your own creativity. It is your realization of the parent potential in your community that will mean a richer and more meaningful educational experience for all children.

Suggested Activities for Parents

This list of activities which you may assign to parents presents a wide range of possibilities—here divided into several categories, depending on whether your volunteers are working individually or with you, the children, other school personnel, or parents.

The first category—individual work—is separated into general and clerical duties which parents may perform.

General duties

Research and compile instructional materials—books, pamphlets, newspaper and magazine articles and pictures, etc.—in a clip file for teacher reference or classroom use

Compile a guide of possible field trips, community resources, guest speakers, and available programs, plays, or displays; make arrangements for any of the above with teacher approval

Arrange decorations or food for class parties; prepare special holiday programs

Operate various types of projectors, tape recorder, record player, or other audiovisual equipment used in the classroom; attend to maintenance and storage of such equipment

Check out and return equipment borrowed from other classrooms or school facilities

Organize and maintain classroom library

Make or mend books, posters, workbooks, learning games or toys, etc., used by children

Make graphs, charts, maps, flash cards, overhead transparencies, and similar items for classroom presentations

Prepare various remedial or supplementary materials for children needing special help

Make picture-word cards for basic foreign language instruction; translate plays and other materials for bilingual instruction projects

Make puppets for story telling

Record filmstrip narrations, stories, and drills

Put assignments or lessons on the board

Arrange bulletin boards and other dis-

plays; dismantle and file materials for future use

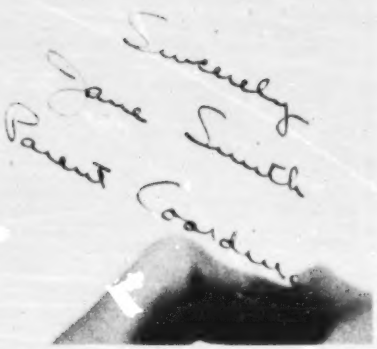
Distribute books, school notices, and instructional materials

Prepare, distribute, and collect art materials—e.g., paper, paints, paste, crayons, and scissors

Set up materials (charts, maps, etc.) for teacher presentations

Adjust heating or cooling, window shades, and lights in classroom as necessary

Help move classroom furniture for special activities and return to original arrangement



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Clean up art or science tables or other classroom work areas

Clean boards, desks, tables, and storage areas for books and other supplies

Clerical duties

Assist during school registration

Prepare school and federal attendance forms

Take attendance and follow up on school absences

Keep class records, statistical reports, federal or state reports, health information, etc.

Alphabetize materials for various school files

Write notes to parents

Collect and record money for milk and lunches; books and other school materials; insurance; field trips and class parties; magazines, newspapers, and class pictures; bank deposits and fund-raising projects; and charity drives

Inventory classroom books, equipment, supplies, and instructional materials

Requisition school supplies

Order and process books, filmstrips, films, overhead transparencies, posters, and free materials

Mark objective tests and workbooks for teacher's review

Score, graph, record, and average test scores and other grades

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Enter names on report cards and transfer grades

Distribute, collect, and file report cards

Type stencils for tests, special worksheets, and class handouts

Duplicate and collate classroom materials

Type, proofread, and duplicate classroom or school newspaper

File student work

File resource materials for specific instructional units

Actual work with children will probably be the most rewarding for your volunteers. Try to involve them in at least one of the following types of classroom activities during each visit.

Help small children with coats and boots

Take new students on a tour of the building

Help children of other ethnic backgrounds adjust to the school situation and the classroom

Serve as a "foster parent" for children who are bused to the school from another area

Lead small-group discussions

Help with handwriting exercises

Write down stories or autobiographies which children dictate

Assist with creative writing activities,

such as helping children write and illustrate their own books

Help children grade their own papers

Assist children in using educational toys and games

Read stories to and with groups or individuals

Assist with creative dramatics, crafts, and art and music activities

Give drills or reviews in mathematics, phonics, spelling, etc., using flash cards or other materials

Aid students with science experiments, art projects, or other special activities

Help children make costumes or scenery for plays

Assist individuals or groups with enrichment instructional projects, independent study, or follow-up work

Help children with seatwork during study periods

Check to see children understand and are following directions for classroom activities

Assist with special tutoring or remedial work

Monitor tests or make-up work

Help children plan and arrange bulletin boards or displays

Supervise rest periods

Direct student clean-up after activities

Monitor class in the absence of the teacher

Supervise peripheral groups while the teacher works with others

Give special instruction in hobbies or crafts

Serve as a resource person, talking to the class about occupations, travel experiences, or other areas where they have special knowledge; show slides or special collections; take students on special tours; give performances in the arts

Supervise after-school parties or club meetings

Solve minor discipline problems under direction of the teacher

There are also many areas of activity outside the classroom where parents

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can help the teacher and the children, as well as other school personnel.

Order, process, catalog, and shelve books for the library or materials for the media center, language lab, etc.

Mend library books; straighten shelves

Help children check out library books or find reference materials

Check on overdue library books

Operate equipment in the media center or language lab; help children use equipment properly; route equipment to classrooms

Help speech therapist with correctional drills

Assist in the counseling office

Work in health office giving minor first aid, calling parents if necessary, helping with inoculation programs and eye and hearing tests, and weighing and measuring children

Supervise collection and distribution of clothing for needy children

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Operate lost and found
Set up hall displays
Monitor halls, doors, and playgrounds to maintain school security

Supervise students in the cafeteria, rest rooms, playground, or auditorium
Work in the school office typing, answering telephones, putting mail in teachers' boxes, etc.
Supervise physical education activities and give skills tests
Help children board buses
Assist teacher on field trips
Help with assembly programs
Make signs to direct visitors to guest parking areas or school meeting rooms
Act as assistant host or hostess for school open houses or meetings; greet guest speakers or other school visitors; write thank-you notes to those who have performed a service for the school
Arrange tours of the school or observations of the parent involvement program
Perform custodial duties in hall, rest rooms, or faculty lounges

While parents will spend a proportionately small amount of time working alone with you, they will be able to give you much valuable knowledge about their children and the community.

Serve as the teacher's interpreter with a non-English-speaking parent
Provide background information on their own children
Inform the teacher of any problems observed in the children
Assist in planning activities such as field trips
Help with informal evaluations of new curriculum materials
Tell the teacher of community problems or special needs
Increase the teacher's understanding of ethnic groups within the community

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Finally, parents can help you by the contacts they have with other parents—in school and during their daily lives as community residents.

Set up conferences and home visits with parents

Greet parents who visit the school

Baby-sit for preschool children while their parents visit the school

Organize parents for special projects

Act as interpreter for non-English-speaking parents; lessen cultural gaps in the community

Translate school notices for non-English-speaking parents

Encourage other parents to join the parent involvement program

Serve as liaison between school and community; explain school programs and services to community members; create greater understanding and communication

Selected References

Following are some of the many books and articles available to assist you in planning for parent involvement. In addition, some research in your local library or in the professional teaching materials compiled by your school or local education association should provide further useful references.

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_____. *Teacher Aides at Work.* Washington, D.C.: the Commission, 1967.

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Services for the Urban School Child. Proceedings of the First National Conference of the National School Volunteer Program of the Public Education Association, October 18-19, 1965. New York City: the Association, 1965.

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Volunteers in the Schools

Listed below are some of the many active school volunteer programs which you might contact or visit to get ideas or information helpful in planning your own parent involvement program. The purpose here is to provide you with a cross section of resource programs, rather than to compile a complete listing of all such existing programs. Varied in size, length of operation, geographic location, special emphasis, types of activities for volunteers, sources of volunteer help, and purpose, some programs have definite structure and procedures, while others operate on a much more informal basis—but all are quite exciting and worthwhile. In some instances, pertinent information about the particular program and the booklets, brochures, and the like that are available is included; other programs have developed such materials which will be distributed in response to specific inquiries. In many cases, the programs are coordinated on a systemwide basis; however, in districts where each school sets up and runs its own program, only a representative sample of the schools within that system is included. Inquiries in your own area should provide further information on other schools you can contact for advice and assistance.

School Resource Volunteers
Berkeley Unified School District
Martin Luther King Junior High School
Room 39
1781 Rose Street
Berkeley, California 94703
415-524-7336

Mrs. Sarah A. Davis
Director, School Volunteer and
Tutorial Services
Los Angeles City Schools Unified
District
Room G-114
450 North Grand Avenue
Los Angeles, California 90054
213-687-4194
Materials available (some free) on request

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George W. Melbrod
Director of Administrative Services
Poway Unified School District
13626 Twin Peaks Road
Poway, California 92064
714-748-0010

Orville B. Aftreth
Assistant Superintendent of the
Elementary Schools Division
San Diego Unified School District
4100 Normal Street
San Diego, California 92103
714-298-4681

Written inquiries preferred for specific information; Handbook for Noon Duty Assistants *(Stock No. 41-N-4500, $ .75—order from the Public Information Office at the above address) includes rules and teaching suggestions for various games*

San Francisco Education Auxiliary
San Francisco Unified School District
Room 213-A
135 Van Ness
San Francisco, California 94102
415-863-4680, ext. 386

Mrs. Hilda Schwartz
Bridgeport Board of Education
45 Lyon Terrace
Bridgeport, Connecticut 06604
203-333-8551, ext. 213 or 214

Offers courses for parents in mathematics and reading before they actively participate; mimeographed copies of parent programs and other materials

Mrs. Eleanor Kennard
Volunteers for Title I Schools
195 Hillandale Avenue
Stamford, Connecticut 06902
203-348-5841, ext. 480

or

Mrs. Mary Booth
Volunteers for Board of Education
Schools
Rice School
135 South Street
Stamford, Connecticut 06901
203-348-5841, ext. 497

Mrs. Marguerite C. Selden
Assistant Superintendent, Department of Summer Schools, Continuing Education, and Urban Service Corps
District of Columbia Board of Education
Presidential Building
415 12th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20004
202-347-7767

Helga Roth
Clearinghouse Director
National Center for Voluntary Action
1735 Eye Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20006
202-466-8444

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Portfolio of materials on volunteers in education, including information on tutoring, team teaching, etc.; listings of helpful publications, many of which were developed by local volunteer programs; "browse room" open for research

National Reading Center
1776 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036
202-833-3300

Is setting up volunteer tutor training programs in each state with workshops for trainers of tutors and for program coordinators; informational brochures on reading topics

Retired Senior Volunteer Program
ACTION
806 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20525
202-382-2047

Provides information and assistance in setting up local programs, based on the needs and interests of the senior volunteers and the schools or other community agencies which need volunteers

Grace Watson
Director, Volunteers in Education
U.S. Office of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20202
202-963-3869

Volunteer ABC's, *a handbook on starting school volunteer programs; materials on business volunteers in education and parent power and a national listing of active volunteer programs are currently being prepared (no charge for materials)*

Howard H. Bede
Skokie School
1155 Oak Street
Winnetka, Illinois 60093
312-446-9400

Special emphasis on using retired persons as volunteers: Co-ordinator's Guide: Volunteers and Volunteer Services in Schools *(160-page, loose-leaf book, $3), kit of reprints and bulletins (pertains to program in Winnetka and other districts, $1),* How To Set Up a Volunteer Talent Pool for Community Service *($1)—order from the Curriculum Publications Department at the above address*

Herbert J. Reese
Assistant Superintendent of Instruction
Bartholomew Consolidated School Corporation
2650 Home Avenue
Columbus, Indiana 47201
812-372-8211, ext. 228

Geneva A. Ross
Reading Consultant, Vigo County School Corporation
Project Read
Washington Building
1101 South 13th Street
Terre Haute, Indiana 47802
812-232-3121

Emphasis on reading; manuals and mimeographed materials, including handouts for volunteers

Mrs. Elaine Coari
Director, School Volunteer Services
New Orleans Board of Education
514 Carondelet Street
New Orleans, Louisiana 70130
504-524-8592, ext. 260

Brochures

Mrs. Martha King
Coordinator, School Volunteer Program
Prince George's County Public Schools
Lincoln Center
5201 Baltimore Lane
Lanham, Maryland 20801
301-459-1500

Training manual, brochures and handouts on suggested activities, materials to use, etc.

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Mrs. Evelyn Ordman
Montgomery County Public Schools
850 North Washington
Rockville, Maryland 20850
301-279-3000

Mrs. Isabel Besecker
Director, School Volunteers for
Boston
16 Arlington Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02116
617-267-2626

Provides reading training program; annual report, newsletters, general information sheet for volunteers (Mrs. Besecker is current president of the National School Volunteer Program, Inc., and may be contacted at the above address for further information on this program)

Francis Keegan
Principal
Thomas B. Pollard School
948 Southern Artery
Quincy, Massachusetts 02169
617-472-3272

Mrs. Susan Newman
Coordinator of Tutorial Services
Ann Arbor Public Schools
401 North Division
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104
313-971-6905
Primary emphasis on reading tutoring; telephone inquiries preferred

Mrs. B. W. Ernst
Coordinator, Department of School Volunteers
Detroit Public Schools
101B Stevenson Building
10100 Grand River
Detroit, Michigan 48204
313-931-3966

or

Bernadine Denning
Schools Center Building
5057 Woodward
Detroit, Michigan 48202
313-833-7900, ext. 2624
"They're Worth Your Time," "Tips for Tutors," recruitment flyers

Betty Jane Reed
Director, Community Resource Volunteers
Minneapolis Public Schools
807 N.E. Broadway
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55413
612-348-6152
Manual on How To Initiate and Administer a Community Resource Volunteer Program

Mrs. Bette Svendsen
Volunteer Coordinator
Baker School
821 Raymond Avenue
St. Paul, Minnesota 55114
612-645-0571
Major emphasis on tutorial programs

Mrs. Evelyn Le Vine
Director, Volunteers in Education
Kansas City Public Schools
Room 814
1211 McGee Street
Kansas City, Missouri 64106
816-BA1-7565, ext. 250

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The Vital Volunteer: A Handbook for Volunteers in Education

Mrs. June Baehr
Coordinator of Volunteer Activities
St. Louis City Schools
911 Locust
St. Louis, Missouri 63101
314-231-3720

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Mrs. Jane Erb
Coordinator of School Volunteers
Administrative Services Center
Springfield Public Schools
940 North Jefferson Street
Springfield, Missouri 65802
417-862-9211

"Adventure in Service: Springfield School Volunteers" brochure, program of 80 slides available to be shown locally by Springfield staff

Mrs. Joan Meltzer
Coordinator, Volunteer Tutorial Programs
Liberty School
12 Tenafly Road
Englewood, New Jersey 07631
201-871-4300, ext. 262

Emphasis on working directly with children

Alfred B. Banks
Community Coordinator
Albuquerque Public Schools
Washington Junior High School
Room 305
131 Tenth Street, S.W.
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87102
505-242-1056

Primary emphasis on tutoring in second through sixth grades; general information packet including tutor handbook

Martin Petersen
Assistant District Principal
Union Free School District 16
Elmont Road School
Elmont, New York 11003
516-354-4917

Mrs. Edwina Devereux
Coordinator of Volunteers
Ithaca Board of Education
400 Lake Street
Ithaca, New York 14850
607-274-2101

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Mrs. Coralee Wiesenthal
Volunteer Coordinator
Mamaroneck Board of Education
Administration Building
740 West Boston Post Road
Mamaroneck, New York 10543
914-698-9000, ext. 239

George Russo
Assistant Superintendent of Schools
Mineola Public Schools
Union Free School District 10
200 Emory Road
Mineola, New York 11501
516-747-6700, ext. 721

Programs for emotionally disturbed and mentally retarded, English as a second language program

Mrs. Marcia Shalen
Director, School Volunteer Program
New York City Board of Education
20 West 40th Street
New York, New York 10018
212-563-5620

Mrs. Elaine London
Coordinator of Volunteers
White Plains Board of Education
5 Homeside Lane
White Plains, New York 10605
914-946-4200

Promotional leaflet

Leonard H. Simmons
Director of Elementary Instruction
Asheboro City Schools
P.O. Box 1103
Asheboro, North Carolina 27203
919-625-5104

Emphasis on noninstructional activities

Mrs. Vivian D. Adams
Supervisor, Tutorial and
Volunteer Services
Cincinnati Public Schools
Education Center
230 East Ninth
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202
513-621-7010

North Avondale School
615 Clinton Springs
Cincinnati, Ohio 45229
513-221-3478

Mrs. Cynthia L. Burks
Coordinator of Volunteers
Cleveland Board of Education
Administration Building
1380 East Sixth Street
Cleveland, Ohio 44114
216-696-2929

Mildred McFarland
Shaker Heights City School System
15600 Parkland Drive
Shaker Heights, Ohio 44120
216-921-1400

Mrs. Lois Rogers
Coordinator, Oklahoma City Schools
Volunteer Program
"Helping Hands"
900 North Klein
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73106
405-232-0581

Millard Z. Pond
Superintendent of Schools
Eugene Public Schools
200 North Monroe
Eugene, Oregon 97402
503-342-5611
Written inquiries preferred

Mrs. Doris B. Wilson
Director, Volunteer Services
School District of Philadelphia
Administration Building
Room 326
21st and Parkway
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103
215-448-3322 or 215-448-3326

Mrs. Barbara Weiss
Supervisor of Volunteers
School Volunteer Association
of Pittsburgh
Regent Square School
Henrietta Street
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15218
412-371-5080

Mrs. Marcia L. Humphreys
Principal
Pine Ridge School
3911 Woodburn Road
Annandale, Virginia 22003
703-280-1581
Includes programs for gifted and children with learning difficulties

Barbara Fry
Principal
Olde Creek School
9524 Old Creek Drive
Fairfax, Virginia 22030
703-591-4445

Mrs. Jewell Keroher
Principal
Chesterbrook School
1753 Kirby Road
McLean, Virginia 22101
703-EL6-3200

Primarily tutorial, including programs for children with learning disabilities

Mrs. Irene Lober
Principal
Franklin Sherman School
6630 Brawner
McLean, Virginia 22101
703-EL6-3874

Mrs. Marjory E. Willkens
Coordinator of Volunteer Programs
Curriculum Department
Mercer Island Public Schools
4160 86th, S.E.
Mercer Island, Washington 98040
206-232-1660

Booklets for reading and math tutors available in the fall of 1972 for a fee

Mrs. Virginia Bigelow
Volunteer Services Coordinator
Seattle Public Schools
Ravenna Elementary School
Room 12
6545 Ravenna Avenue, N.E.
Seattle, Washington 98115
206-LA3-6077

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Norm Rose
Director, In-Service Education, and
Volunteer Coordinator
Milwaukee Public Schools
P.O. Drawer 10K
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53201
414-475-8046

Primarily volunteer reading tutors; recruitment flyers

Merrill Thompson
Principal
Bryant Elementary School
6010 John Avenue
Superior, Wisconsin 54880
715-394-0281

William Axt
Principal
Franklin Elementary School
210 37th Avenue East
Superior, Wisconsin 54880
715-398-5155 (a.m.);
715-398-3153 (p.m.)

Ray McGettigan
Principal
Peter Cooper Elementary School
Teacher-Mom Program
Weisberg Memorial Center
1811 Missouri Avenue
Superior, Wisconsin 54880
715-394-0262